



# **Parent Information Packet**

**for the**

**2000**

## **Standardized Testing and Reporting Program STAR**

**March 2000**

**prepared by the**

**Standards and Assessment Division  
California Department of Education**





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# 2000 Standardized Testing and Reporting Program

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## Questions and Answers for Parents

### **What is the STAR testing program?**

One part of the state testing system is the Standardized Testing and Reporting (STAR) program. This program, administered annually, was authorized in 1997 by state law (Senate Bill 376). The purpose of the STAR testing program is to help measure how well students are learning basic academic skills.

### **Who must take the STAR tests?**

All students in grades 2 through 11 must take the designated STAR tests. Students learning English and students in special education programs are included. Only students whose Individual Education Plans (IEP) specifically exempt them from standardized testing and students with written parent requests to exempt them do not take the STAR tests.

### **What tests will the students take in 2000?**

For the third year, public school students will be tested with the Stanford Achievement Test, Ninth Edition, Form T (Stanford 9), published by Harcourt Educational Measurement.

Students in grades 2 through 11 will be tested in reading, writing, and mathematics. Students in grades 2 through 8 also will be tested in spelling; students in grades 9 through 11 also will be tested in history-social science and science.

As part of the STAR program, students are given additional test questions that match state-adopted content standards for reading, writing, and mathematics. The purpose of augmenting the test is to better align the STAR program with state standards.

### **How do the questions for the STAR augmentation relate to a student's grade level?**

In grades 2 through 7 and in grade 11, the questions for the STAR augmentation in reading, writing, and mathematics are tied to what students should know and be able to do at each grade level. In grades 8 through 10, augmented questions for reading and writing are tied to specific grade levels. The augmented questions for mathematics in grades 8 through 10 are not tied to a specific grade level. They are tied to the math course in which a student is enrolled.

### **What are the math courses for which there is a STAR augmentation?**

There are six test options for the augmented math test: algebra I, geometry, algebra II, 1st-year integrated math, 2nd-year integrated math, and 3rd-year integrated math.

### **What if a student in grade 8, 9, or 10 is not enrolled in one of the specified courses?**

A student in grade 8, 9, or 10 who is not enrolled in one of the specified courses does not take the STAR augmentation in mathematics. That student takes the mathematics portion of the Stanford 9, Form T, and will receive results for that part of the STAR test.

### **If a student in grade 8, 9, or 10 is enrolled in a math class more advanced than his or her grade level, how will the scores for the STAR augmentation be reported?**

Students in grade 8, 9, or 10 who take the STAR augmentation above or below the designated grade-level test will receive individual scores. Their scores will not be included in the school scores for their grade level.

School, district, county, and state results on the math augmentation will report eighth graders completing the algebra I or 1st-year integrated math tests, ninth graders completing the geometry or 2nd-year integrated math tests, and tenth graders completing the algebra II or 3rd-year integrated math tests.

### **What about limited English-proficient students?**

In addition to taking the designated STAR tests in English, limited English-proficient Spanish-speaking students who first enrolled in California public schools fewer than 12 months prior to testing must take a primary language test in Spanish. Primary language testing is optional if the students first enrolled more than 12 months prior to testing. The designated test in Spanish for spring 2000 is the Spanish Assessment of Basic Education, Second Edition (SABE/2). This test is published by CTB/McGraw-Hill.

### **What does the SABE/2 test cover?**

The SABE/2 covers reading, language, mathematics, spelling at grades 2 through 11; word analysis at grades 2 and 3; and study skills at grades 4 through 11.

# 2000 Standardized Testing and Reporting Program

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## Questions and Answers for Parents

### **Who gives the STAR tests, and how long do they take?**

Teachers who receive special training give the STAR tests at the local school. It takes about 7 hours for the Stanford 9 and STAR augmentation. The primary language test in Spanish adds about 4 hours for limited English-proficient students taking the SABE/2. In most schools STAR testing is spread over several days.

### **How are the questions on the tests asked?**

All of the test questions are in a multiple-choice format. These questions require students to select the correct answer from four possible answers. Questions on the Stanford 9 and SABE/2 tests have been tried out with thousands of students throughout the United States to see if they are appropriate for the grade level and content being tested. Questions for the STAR augmentation have been tried out on students throughout California.

### **Can parents see the STAR tests?**

No. The test questions can be seen only by students when they take the tests. This security measure ensures that the tests are fair for all students and that test questions can be used for more than one year. The law requiring STAR testing does allow local school boards to see the tests under secure conditions.

### **What if parents do not want their student tested?**

According to Education Code section 60615, parents or guardians can submit a written request to the principal of their student's school if they do not wish to have their student take any or all parts of the tests. Written requests from parents or guardians are honored.

### **What is done to help students with special needs?**

Most students with special needs take the test with all other students under standard conditions. Certain accommodations and adaptations such as additional time, Braille, or large-print tests are provided for those special education students who need assistance. Accommodations also include revised test directions or format or the use of aides and/or aids to provide additional help. Testing accommodations for students in special education will vary depending on the content of the specific test. The accommodations must be based on explicit statements in each student's IEP.

### **What if a student is absent on testing days or misses one part of the required tests?**

Schools will provide at least two test makeup dates. Parents should contact the school about test makeup procedures.

### **Who will see the test results for individual students?**

Each student's teacher and parents or guardians will see the individual student results. Individual student results are confidential. Copies will be kept in the student's cumulative file with other confidential data.

### **How and when will parents get their student's test results?**

Each student's test results must be reported to parents within 20 working days after the school district receives them. In most cases these reports will be mailed. Group results by grade level for each school, district, county, and the state will be posted on the Internet no later than July 15, 2000. Results for the Stanford 9 and the augmentation and results for the SABE/2 will be on separate reports.

### **How will individual test results be reported for students?**

The Stanford 9 and SABE/2 results will be reported as national percentiles. A national percentile compares the student's results with scores of students at the same grade who were and tested at the same time of the school year in a national sample.

The scores for the STAR augmentation will be reported as the number of questions the student answered correctly. There will be no comparison to other students. In future years, these scores will indicate levels of student performance such as advanced, proficient, basic, and below basic. These levels of performance will relate to how well students are meeting state standards for each subject area tested.

# 2000 Standardized Testing and Reporting Program

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## Questions and Answers for Parents

### **What about STAR reports for students with special needs?**

Reports for students with special needs will include only the number of questions answered correctly if:

- students take the test in Braille, or
- students take a test that is for students more than one grade level below the grade they would be assigned to in a regular program.

Reports for students with special needs include all test scores but are designated “non-standard test administration” if:

- students are given extra time to take the test,
- students are given special assistance, or
- students used a revised test form.

### **How are the STAR test results used?**

Teachers, parents, and students use individual STAR results to help monitor each student’s academic progress. Individual student results are merged to prepare grade-level reports by subject area for each school, district, county, and the state. The results are used with other information about student achievement to help make decisions about ways to improve student learning and school programs.

Stanford 9 test results for the 1999 administration were used to calculate the 1999 Academic Performance Index (API) for schools throughout California. The API, a major component of the state’s new accountability program, is to be used to rank the academic performance of schools, set targets for growth, and monitor progress over time. The Stanford 9 results for 2000 will be used to see how well schools meet their 1999–2000 targets.

### **How can parents help their students do better on STAR?**

Prior to testing each year, parents need to talk to their students about the STAR test(s) and encourage them to do their best. Parents or guardians should:

- make sure class assignments and homework are completed throughout the year.
- listen to students read every day—review what they are doing in school.
- ensure that students are in school every day unless they are ill.

Parents can help prepare students for testing day by making sure they have plenty of rest and a good breakfast. Schools have information about ways families can help their students improve in specific academic areas.

### **How can parents help the school improve student achievement?**

Schools invite parents, guardians, and other community members to become actively involved in improving student learning. Every school has various committees of parents who assist in school decision making, including the Parent Teacher Association and school site councils. In addition, individual teachers are frequently in search of volunteers to help with classroom instruction. Research studies show that parent and community involvement in the school can improve academic achievement.

### **How can parents get their questions about STAR and their student’s results and the API answered?**

Parents or guardians should begin with their students’ teachers. Additional information may be available through the school principal or counselor. Questions about the STAR program also can be directed to the STAR test coordinator at the school district office.





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### **Who will see the test results for individual students?**

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### **How do the STAR test results fit with other information about a student's academic progress?**

STAR test results are one of the ways schools measure student achievement. Tools for monitoring student progress include but are not

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limited to standardized tests such as the ones used for STAR, district tests, classroom tests and projects, and student grades. Test results from the STAR program can be used to help measure student progress over time and to provide comparisons with other states and the nation. Results from the STAR augmentation can be used to see how well students are meeting state-adopted content standards for the subject areas tested.

### **How can parents get their questions about STAR and their student's results and the API answered?**

Parents or guardians should begin with their students' teachers. Additional information may be available through the school principal or counselor. Questions about the STAR program also can be directed to the STAR test coordinator at the school district office.



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# **Standardized Testing and Reporting Program**

## **STAR 2000**



## **Information for Parents**

**February 2000**

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## **Standardized Testing and Reporting Program STAR 2000**

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### **What tests do the students take in 2000?**

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As part of the STAR program, students are to be given additional test questions that match state-adopted content standards for reading, writing, and mathematics. The purpose of the augmented test is to better align the STAR program with state standards.

### **What subjects are tested in English?**

Students in grades 2 through 8 are tested with the Stanford 9 in reading, written expression (language), spelling, and mathematics. Students in grades 9 through 11 are tested in reading, writing (language), mathematics, history-social science, and science. The questions for the STAR augmentation cover reading, writing, and mathematics in grades 2 through 11.

### **What about limited English-proficient students?**

In addition to taking the designated STAR tests in English, limited English-proficient Spanish-speaking students who first enrolled in California public schools less than 12 months prior to testing must take a primary language test in Spanish. Primary language testing is optional if the students first enrolled more than 12 months prior to testing. The designated test in Spanish for spring 2000 is the Spanish Assessment of Basic Education, Second Edition (SABE/2). This test is published by CTB/McGraw-Hill.

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### **How are the questions on the tests asked?**

All of the test questions are in a multiple-choice format. These questions require students to select the correct answer from four possible answers. Questions on the Stanford 9 and SABE/2 tests have been tried out with thousands of students throughout the United States to see if they are appropriate for the grade level and content being tested. Questions for the STAR augmentation have been tried out on students throughout California.

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Each student's test results must be reported to parents within 20 working days after the school district receives them. In most cases, these reports will be mailed. Group results by grade level for each school, district, county, and the state will be posted on the Internet no later than July 15, 2000. Results for the Stanford 9 and the STAR augmentation and results for the SABE/2 will be on separate reports.

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## You Can Help Your Children Do Better on Tests

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- Attend parent information meetings. Ask questions about the major tests given to students and other ways academic achievement is measured.
- Visit your school to see what and how students are learning.
- Know when the major tests such as the STAR test will be given and what grade levels and subject areas will be covered.
- Share test-like material that comes to the home, such as opinion surveys or sample voting ballots.
- Discuss with your children the importance of doing their best on assignments and tests.
- Make sure your children get a good night's rest and breakfast before a big test.
- Discuss coming tests with your children and try to reduce pretest anxieties.
- Do not plan activities that will take your children away from school on testing days.
- Attend parent-teacher conferences to find out how well your children are achieving and what they need to do to improve.

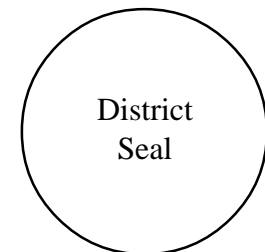
### To Know More

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You are encouraged to contact the school for additional information about your child's learning. Information about the tests students are taking at your school also is available.

# Helping Your Children Achieve

Sample Brochure



**Northern California School District**  
1234 No Name Street  
Anytown, CA 00000-0000  
Phone: 222-555-1111  
Fax: 222-555-2222

**Principal:** Mr. John Jones

February 2000

## Suggestions for Parents

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As you talk with your student's teachers about results of the 2000 Standardized Testing and Reporting (STAR) Program, one question you may have is "How can I help them do better?" You want your students to do well in school, and what you do at home can make a difference.

Parents or guardians play an important role in their students' education. Positive attitudes of families about completing school assignments, learning new skills, and "doing your best" can affect how well students achieve. The results of research about learning show that a great deal can be done at home to increase a student's academic performance.

There are many things you can do to support your student's education. The idea is to encourage students to expand their knowledge and practice what they are learning at school. Some activities for helping your students in reading, writing, spelling, mathematics, and other academic areas follow.

## In Reading and Writing

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- Talk with your children about their studies, homework, and what they did at school.
- Listen to your children read and read stories aloud to them.
- Have a family time when you read the newspaper, a magazine, or a book, and your children read their own books.
- Talk about what you and your children are reading and words they do not understand.
- Encourage your children to write such things as shopping lists, thank-you notes, requests, short stories, recipes, and journals.
- Set a limit on the amount of time your children watch television. Watch and discuss television programs with them whenever possible.
- Take your children to the library regularly and help them select their books.

## In Mathematics

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- Attend parent education classes about mathematics to prepare for questions that your children might ask at home.
- Check with your children every day to make sure homework assignments are completed.

- Ask questions about mathematics and solve problems as you play games, watch television, or prepare a favorite recipe.
- Show children how you use mathematics in what you do every day (e.g., cooking, crafts, automobile repair, speedometer reading, shopping).
- Help your children read charts or graphs in newspapers, magazines, or television, and talk about what they mean.

## In Other Academic Areas

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Other academic areas such as science and history challenge students to combine reading and mathematics skills with their knowledge of the subject. As students read about a given subject, they learn the vocabulary and knowledge to complete assignments and answer questions on tests.

Parents should share their interests in any of these academic areas because children become interested in what is discussed at home. Family trips might include visits to museums and historic sites. Television viewing might include one night a week when the family chooses to learn about a topic of the student's choice. Newspapers, magazine articles, or television programs about a new scientific discovery or an important historical event should be shared and discussed.

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# Sample School/Home Newsletter Insert

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This spring, students at \_\_\_\_\_ school will again participate in California's Standardized Testing and Reporting (STAR) program. The STAR tests will be administered on \_\_\_\_\_. Make-up days will be on \_\_\_\_\_ and on \_\_\_\_\_.

All students in grades 2 through 8 will be tested in reading, written expression (language), spelling, and mathematics. Students in grades 9, 10, and 11 will be tested in reading, writing (language), mathematics, science, and history-social science.

For the third year, students are to be tested in English with the Stanford Achievement Test, Ninth Edition, Form T (Stanford 9). As part of the STAR program, students also will be given additional test questions that match state-adopted content standards for reading, writing, and mathematics. The purpose of the augmentation is to better align the STAR program with state standards that specify what students should know and be able to do at every grade. This is the second year for the STAR augmentation.

## For the Intermediate Level

In grades 6 through 8, questions for the STAR augmentation in reading and writing are tied to what students should know and be able to do at specific grade levels. That is also true for the augmented mathematics questions in grades 6 and 7. In grade 8, however, augmented mathematics questions are not tied to a specific grade level but to the math course in which a student is enrolled. For example, an eighth grader in algebra I takes the algebra I augmentation. Eighth graders not in one of these specific math courses are not given the augmented math test. If eighth graders are enrolled in a math class above or below the test designated for their grade level, those results are not included in the school or district results.

## For the High School Level

In grades 9 through 11, questions for the STAR augmentation in reading and writing are tied to what students should know and be able to do at specific grade levels. That was also true for the augmented mathematics questions in grade 11. In grades 9 and 10, however, the augmented mathematics questions are not tied to a specific grade level but to the math course in which a student was enrolled. Courses specified for the STAR augmentation are algebra I, geometry, algebra II, 1st-year integrated math, 2nd-year integrated math, and 3rd-year integrated math. If ninth or tenth graders are enrolled in a math class above or below the test designated for their grade level, those results are not included in the school or district results.

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In addition to the STAR test in English, limited English-proficient Spanish-speaking students who first enrolled in California public schools less than 12 months prior to testing are given the Spanish Assessment of Basic Education (SABE/2).

Reports of each student's results on the test will be mailed home within 20 days after they arrive in the district. Reports of results for the Stanford 9 and the STAR augmentation are separate from the report of results for the SABE/2. School, district, county, or state results will not be included with the student reports sent home. These scores will be available on the Internet at [www.cde.ca.gov](http://www.cde.ca.gov) on July 15, 2000. Only school, district, county, and state results will be available on the Internet. Individual student results are confidential and will be shared only with each student's parents/guardians and teachers.

The school staff is planning several activities prior to the end of school to help parents or guardians understand the reports. Parents will receive more information about these activities when plans are finalized.

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# Sample Principal's Letter before STAR Testing Begins

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Dear Parents or Guardians:

Your student, along with public school students throughout California, will participate in the state's Standardized Testing and Reporting (STAR) program this spring. The STAR tests will be administered on \_\_\_\_\_. Make-up days will be on \_\_\_\_\_ and on \_\_\_\_\_.

All students in California in grades 2 through 8 will be tested in reading, written expression (language), spelling, and mathematics. Students in grades 9, 10, and 11 will be tested in reading, writing (language), mathematics, science, and history-social science.

For the third year, students will be tested in English with the Stanford Achievement Test, Ninth Edition, Form T (Stanford 9). As part of the STAR program, students also will be given additional test questions that match state-adopted content standards for reading, writing, and mathematics. The purpose of the augmentation is to better align the STAR program with state standards that specify what students should know and be able to do at every grade. This is the second year for the STAR augmentation.

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A report of your student's results on the test will be sent to your home within 20 days after they arrive in the district. If your student takes the SABE/2, results for that test will be on a separate report.

School, district, county, or state results will not be included with the student reports sent to your home. These scores will be available on the Internet at [www.cde.ca.gov](http://www.cde.ca.gov) on July 15, 2000. Only school, district, county, and state results will be available on the Internet. Individual student results are confidential and will be shared only with each student's parents/guardians and teachers.

Our staff is planning several activities prior to the end of school to help you understand your student's test results when they arrive. We will send you more information about these activities when plans are finalized.

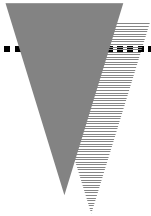
Please contact our school office at \_\_\_\_\_ if you have questions about the STAR testing schedule for this spring or the process for reporting student and school results.



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## **Transparency Masters**

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# **Standardized Testing and Reporting (STAR) Program**



# **Standardized Testing and Reporting Program STAR**

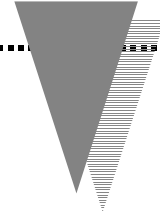
- ◆ **Established by Senate Bill 376, Alpert (Chapter 828/1997)**
- ◆ **Amended by Senate Bill 366, Alpert (Chapter 735/1999)**
- ◆ **Requires that all students be tested:**
  - **in grades 2 through 11**
  - **in English**
  - **with a nationally-normed achievement test designated by SBE**
  - **between March 15 and May 15 each year**



# **Standardized Testing and Reporting Program STAR**

## **Subjects to be tested:**

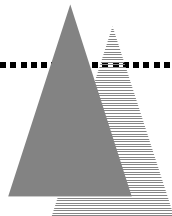
- ◆ reading, writing, and mathematics at grades 2 through 11
- ◆ spelling at grades 2 through 8
- ◆ history-social science and science at grades 9, 10, and 11

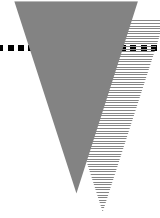


# **STAR**

## **Primary Language Testing**

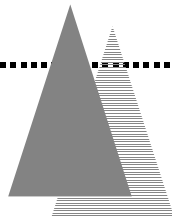
- ◆ **Required at grades 2–11 for Spanish-speaking limited English-proficient (LEP) students who have been enrolled in California public schools fewer than 12 months**
- ◆ **Is a district option for LEP students who have been enrolled longer than 12 months**
- ◆ **Must use primary language test designated by State Board**
- ◆ **Must also give Stanford 9, Form T, in English to all students in grades 2–11, regardless of language fluency**

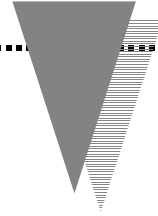




# **STAR Tests To Be Administered**

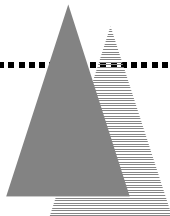
- ◆ **Stanford Achievement Test, Ninth Edition, Form T (SAT9) to all students in grades 2–11**
- ◆ **STAR augmentation to all students in grades 2–11**
- ◆ **Spanish Assessment of Basic Education, Second Edition (SABE/2)**





# **2000 STAR Augmentation**

- ◆ **STAR augmentation covers language arts and mathematics at grades 2–11.**
- ◆ **Test questions aligned to content standards adopted by State Board of Education to augment the Stanford 9, Form T.**





# **2000 STAR Augmentation**

## **At Grades 2–7 and 11:**

- ◆ All students take Stanford 9, Form T, and STAR augmentation for their grade level.
- ◆ All test items at each grade level in one test booklet.





# **2000 STAR Augmentation**

**At Grades 8, 9, and 10:**

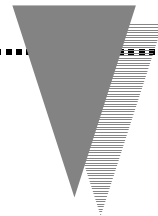
- ◆ All students take Stanford 9, Form T, (language arts, mathematics, spelling, history-social science, and science) plus the augmented language arts items in one test booklet.



# **2000 STAR Augmentation**

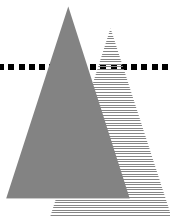
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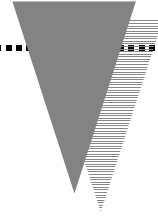
- ◆ The augmented mathematics test tied to student enrollment in specific courses, but not to specific grade level.
- ◆ Scores for students in math classes above or below the test designated for their grade levels will be reported on individual reports, but will not be included in the school or district results for their grade levels.
- ◆ Students not enrolled in a specified course will not take the STAR augmentation.



# **2000 STAR Augmentation**

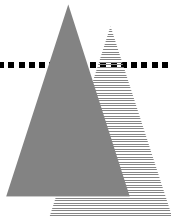
- ◆ **Six STAR augmentation options with separate test booklets are:**
  - **separate test content by discipline (traditional sequence)**
    - **algebra I**
    - **geometry**
    - **algebra II**
  - **same content as traditional, organized differently (integrated sequence)**
    - **1st-year integrated**
    - **2nd-year integrated**
    - **3rd-year integrated**





# STAR 2000

- ◆ The Stanford 9, Form T, and the STAR augmentation take about 7 hours to complete.
- ◆ The SABE/2 takes about 4 hours to complete.
- ◆ The questions are all multiple choice.
- ◆ Testing dates for our district are \_\_\_\_\_.





# **Standardized Testing and Reporting Program**

**What parents can do to help  
their student:**

- ◆ **Have your student get plenty of rest.**
- ◆ **Provide a good breakfast.**
- ◆ **Encourage your student to do his or her best.**



# **Standardized Testing and Reporting Program**

- ◆ **Parents will receive their student's results within 20 working days after the district receives them.**
- ◆ **Group results by grade level for each school, district, county, and the state will be posted on the Internet by July 15, 2000.**